

## Message Text

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ACTION CU-04

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5954

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC, SCUL, DR

SUBJECT: AMSPEC PROGRAM: ART EXPERT DONALD GOODALL

REF: SANTO DOMINGO 4988 AND 3862

1. SUMMARY: BRIEF VISIT (JANUARY 4-10) BY DR. DONALD GOODALL, DIRECTOR OF ART COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS IN AUSTIN, TO SERVE AS CONSULTANT FOR (ABUILDING) MUSEUM OF MODERN ART WAS EVERYTHING POST HAD HOPED FOR. WITH LIFETIME OF INVOLVEMENT IN ART AND ART EDUCATION, FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE OF MUSEUM TECHNICALITIES, AND ENTHUSIASM FOR HIS WORK, GOODALL MADE A TREMENDOUS IMPRESSION ON EVERYONE HE ENCOUNTERED-FROM MUSEUM'S ARCHITECT AND NEWLY-NAMED MUSEUM BOARD MEMBERS TO PRESIDENT JOAQUIN BALAGUER. GOODALL WAS DEFT DIPLOMAT IN HIS PRESENTATIONS: HE AVOIDED AUTHORITY CATEGORICAL STATEMENTS AND, INSTEAD, OFFERED ALTERNATIVES FOR BOARD'S CONSIDERATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A MUSEUM "MASTER PLAN" THAT DOMINICANS HAD REQUESTED HIM TO SUBMIT. IN SHORT, GOODALL SOMEHOW MANAGED TO COMMUNICATE COMPLEXITIES INVOLVED IN ESTABLISHMENT OF A MODERN MUSEUM OF ART (INCLUDING ESTABLISHMENT OF RESPONSIBLE, INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION) WITHOUT DISCOURAGING DOMINICAN NEOPHYTES ON MAGNITUDE OF THEIR JOB. AFTER STRESSING THROUGHOUT HIS PERSONAL VIEW THAT MUSEUM MUST BE LIVING, MOVING, EDUCATIONAL INSTRUMENT AS OPPOSED TO BUILDING FURNISHED WITH PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURE, GOODALL CONCLUDED VISIT BY SAYING, MAS O MENOS, "I'LL BE HAPPY TO ASSIST IN WHATEVER WAY I CAN, IF YOU SHARE MY VIEW THAT THIS MUSEUM SHOULD BE A VITAL INSTITUTION IN THE DOMINICAN FUTURE." AND THAT WAS A SURE-FIRE FAREWELL: HOPEFULLY, IT WILL HELP PRODUCE MUSEUM BUDGET SUPPORT FROM NATIONAL PALACE.

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2. DAYS WERE SPENT--WITH MUSEUM ARCHITECT AND THREE MOST ACTIVE MEMBERS OF FIVE-MEMBER MUSEUM BOARD--WALKING UNFINISHED MUSEUM TO REVIEW TECHNICAL BUILDING PROBLEMS (LIGHTING, WALL-FINISHING, STORAGE, TRAFFIC PATTERNS, FREIGHT ENTRY, ETC.) AND MEETING TO DISCUSS GOODALL-DESIGNED "MASTER PLAN" WHICH ENCOMPASSES ADMINISTRATION/CURATORIAL/EXHIBITION/EDUCATION PROGRAMS. LUNCHEON MEETINGS WERE INFORMAL OPPORTUNITIES TO REVIEW MASTER PLAN AND TO CONSIDER HOW MUSEUM SHOULD APPROACH QUESTIONS OF PERMANENT COLLECTION, VISITING EXHIBITS, ART EDUCATION AND DOCENT PROGRAMS, ETC. PRESENT FOR ALL DISCUSSIONS WAS MINISTER-COUNSELOR DARIO SURO OF DOMINICAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON, WHO--AS PROMINENT PAINTER--PERHAPS IS FRONT-RUNNER FOR POSITION OF MUSEUM DIRECTOR.

3. IN SPARE MOMENTS, BOARD MEMBERS AND USIS ATTEMPTED TO SHOW DR GOODALL OTHER FACETS OF LOCAL CULTURAL LIFE, INCLUDING COLONIAL RESTORATION PROJECTS AND MUSEUMS, BELLAS ARTES MUSEUM, THE ARTISTS-SUPPORTED CASA DE TEATRO, ETC.

4. GOODALL'S LAST FULL DAY, JANUARY 9, WAS PREDICTABLY HECTIC: LECTURE AT NATIONAL THEATER "WHAT IS A MODER MUSEUM: A PERSONAL VIEW" AT 8 P.M. FOLLOWED BY PARTY AT PAO HOUSE--AND GOODALL'S APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT BALAGUER STILL PENDING. EVENTUALLY PRESIDENTIAL SUMMONS CAME FOR 9 P.M.: CHARGE AXELROD COURAGEOUSLY EXTRICATED GOODALL FROM QUESTIONING AUDIENCE (88, AND QUALITY) AND ESCORTED VISITOR, MUSEUM ARCHITECT AND SURO TO REWARDING 35-MINUTE INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT. GOODALL PRESENTED MASTER PLAN IN WRITING, EXPLAINED EACH POINT PLUS BOARD FEELINGS, AND EMPHASIZED NECESSITY FOR FIVE-YEAR BUDGET FROM MUSEUM FROM OUTSET (MOOT POINT: LONGTERM FISCAL PLANNING GENERALLY NON-EXISTENT HERE). APPARENTLY UNDISMAYED BY LASTNCJMMAL NEWS, PRESIDENT REQUESTED ARCHITECT TO ARRANGE ANOTHER GOODALL VISIT BEFORE MUSEUM INAUGURATION IN MAY--ANOTHER TESTIMONIAL TO GOODALL'S EFFECTIVENESS AND ENTHUSIASM WHICH SEEMINGLY ENABLE HURDLING OF LANGUAGE BARRIERS.

5. MEANWHILE BACK AT PAO HOUSE.- FORTY-FIVE WERE EXPECTED AND APPROXIMATELY NINETY-FIVE APPEARED (ARTISTIC GRAPEVINE IS BETTER THAN TELEPHONE). DIN TERRIFIC, ALL (PAINTERS, SCULPTORS, ARCHITECTS, COLLECTORS, CRITICS) WANTED TIMING WITH VISITOR, WHO UNCLASSIFIED

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STOPPED TALKING AT 3:30 A.M. DURING EVENING, THREE FRIENDS GRATUITOUSLY VOLUNTEERED "TWENTY-SIX PAINTERS IN ONE SPOT AND NO FISTFIGHT YET..."

6. COMMENT: GOODALL VISIT INVALUABLE. USIS BRAINSTROM TO INVITE GOODALL AS PROFESSOR FOR EX-GRANTEE SEMINAR MARCH HAS WORKED OUT: HIS SCHEDULE ALLOWS PARTICIPATION, SO LUCK RATHER THAN GOOD PLANNING ENABLES MISSION TO RESPOND TO

PRESIDENT'S SPECIFIC REQUEST. SINCE HIS DEPARTURE, ART CRITIC BOARD MEMBER HAS PRODUCED SIX ARTICLES "CONVERSATIONS ABOUT A MUSEUM" FEATURING PROMINENT ARTISTS' VIEWS (REFLECTING GOODALL PHILOSOPHY), TO CREATE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS OF MUSEUM ROLE. ON ANOTHER SUBJECT, THANKS TO CU/ARA FOR EXCELLENT SUPPORT. ANOTHER LONG HIATUS, EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED THREE STELLAR AMSPECS BETWEEN JANUARY 1975 AND JANUARY 1976 -BLOOMFIELD, STRASMA AND GOODALL. POST DELIGHTED THAT LATTER TWO RETURNING IN MARCH FOR EX-GRANTEE SEMINAR. HURWITCH

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